

# Sustainability of Cultural Entrepreneurs (Thai Traditional Textile) in Doing Business

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## ABSTRACT---

**Background-** Culture Industry was used in several countries to be tools in economic development. To create cultural entrepreneurs is foundation of driving cultural industry to the wealth, stability and sustainability. In present, Thailand still lacks of the process in incubating cultural entrepreneurs, especially in Thai traditional textiles.

**Objective-1)** To propose conceptual and viewpoints of expert for incubating entrepreneurs including the requirements of services of incubating center 2) To propose model of incubating process to use in incubating cultural entrepreneurs for Thai traditional textile to be sustainably successful.

**Methods-** This research is qualitative research using semi-structured depth interview from 30 expert personnel in business incubating, consist of 15 Thai textile expert personnel, 15 design expert personnel, 5 technology expert personnel, and 5 business expert personnel.

**Expected Result-** model of incubating process to use in incubating cultural entrepreneurs for Thai traditional textile to be sustainably successful.

**Conclusions-** There is nine important factors in incubating cultural entrepreneurs for Thai traditional textile and driving them to be sustainably successful. Experts emphasized that the most important factor is to construct an incubating center which provides activities and services systematically. Bringing technology and innovation to use in incubating processes to develop potentials of the entrepreneurs.

**Contribution–** New knowledge that merging concepts of activities and services of incubating center and concepts of entrepreneur incubating to build entrepreneurs to be successful.

**Keywords ---** Cultural Entrepreneur, Incubator center, Incubation process, Thai traditional Textiles

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## 1. BACKGROUND/ OBJECTIVES AND GOALS

Culture industry was used as a tool in economic development in several countries, by using culture that reflected the way of local people living and lifestyle to create commercial products. There was linkages cultural capital into economic system merging cultural assets, folk wisdom and knowledge. Then creating cultural entrepreneurs was the important foundation for driving Culture industry to the wealth stability and sustainability according the Thailand government policy (Leadbeater and Oakley ,1999; Ageson , 2008 )

At present, Thailand has several organizations that function in incubating new entrepreneurs. Anyway, it emphasized on technological entrepreneur and general business. There is no processes in building Thai traditional textiles entrepreneur, even though Thai traditional textiles have distinctive characteristics products and widespread in all regions of the country. The question is that what is the process model should be, to create cultural entrepreneurs especially in Thai traditional textiles to be sustainably successful.

Cammarata (2003) commented that objectives of process in selecting the entrepreneurs into the incubating center was to find the corresponding between the needs of entrepreneurs and vision of incubating center for both in potentials and provided resources required. Along with Walker (2004) that viewed that process in selecting the entrepreneurs into the incubating center was to set the suitability of vision and resources of the incubating program and needs of entrepreneurs to support the entrepreneur to reach the most benefits to be successfully entrepreneur, especially under the limitations of personnel and findings.

This research is the study of conceptual and viewpoints if experts in entrepreneur incubator including the requirements feedback from services of incubator center. To propose incubating process model that can be used in cultural entrepreneurs especially in Thai traditional textiles to be sustainably succeeded.

## 2. METHODS

Authors has studied two types of data 1) primary data are from in depth interviews 2) secondary data are from literature reviews, documents, report summaries, books, journals, and websites etc. The population and sample group in this qualitative research are experts who involved with incubators for 30 samples, comprised of 15 experts in Thai traditional textiles, 15 experts in design, 5 experts in technology and 5 experts in business.

Method of interview is Semi-Structured Interview by interview scripts about requirements for service from incubator center. The questions are open-ended for freely answer and opinions express. Interview scripts are screened and checked by experts and data is brought to do content analysis as shown in figure 1.

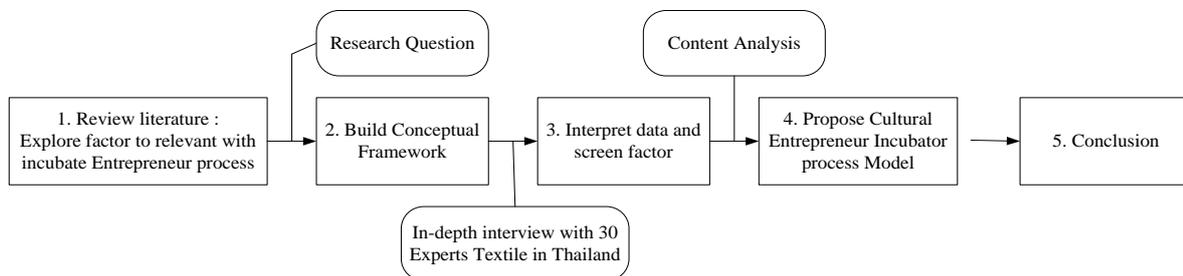


Fig. 1

Methodology of the Study

## 3. RESULTS

Qualitative data analysis from interviewing of 30 experts in business incubating revealed that needs of services from incubating center are comprised of nine factors :

- 1) To set an incubating program for Thai traditional textile entrepreneurs
- 2) To prepare the readiness for entrepreneurs into AEC
- 3) To train how to do business
- 4) To train production process
- 5) To set counseling center
- 6) To find sources of loans by cooperating with alliances
- 7) To provide sources of funds
- 8) To find distribution channels
- 9) To provide services for information.

From the viewpoints of experts in setting Thai textile cultural incubating center are consisted of 5 components:

- 1) To set incubating center by government in any provinces
- 2) To set incubating center with central department in cooperating with other departments
- 3) To use technology in helping incubating processes

- 4) To collect information of knowledge in Thai textile by central department
- 5) To measure the success of incubating center

The result of quantitative study can conclude as follows

Data analysis from responded questionnaires about service activities of incubator center from 30 experts can be divided into 9 perspectives,

- Perspective 1: there is need for setting project for incubating about Thai textile with average score 5.00 (extremely high) (4.21-5.00)
- Perspective 2: In preparing for readiness to join AEC, there is need for training about market seeking in local and foreign countries with average score 3.93 (3.41-4.20)
- Perspective 3: In training about doing business, there is need for training about market opportunity seeking with average score 4.87 (extremely high) (4.21-5.00), the second priority is training about business planning, training about technology using in marketing with average score 3.83 (high) (3.41-4.20) and training about intellectual properties with average score 3.13 (moderate) (2.61-3.40)
- Perspective 4: In training about production process, there are needs to training about weaving technique with average score 5.00 (extremely high), training for product design with average score 4.93 and training about tie-dyeing technique with average score 4.60 (extremely high) (4.21-5.00), training for ... technique with average score 3.73 and training for using machinery in production to increase production efficiency with average score 3.43 (high) (3.41-4.20), training about packing design with average score 3.10 (moderate) (2.61-3.40) and training about mulberry cultivating and silk worm farming with average score 2.10 (low) (1.80-2.60)
- Perspective 5: In training about counseling center by special experts with other departments, there are needs for business and marketing experts with average score 4.60 (extremely high) (4.21-5.00), needs for production technique experts with average score 4.10, needs for production technology experts with average score 4.00, needs for commercialization technology experts with average score 3.93 and financial and investment experts with average score 3.43 (high) (3.41-4.20)
- Perspective 6: providing loans for entrepreneurs by cooperated with alliances, there are needs for loans finding with average score 3.87
- Perspective 7: providing sources of funds by cooperated with other departments, there are needs for funding from government with average 5.00, from incubating center and from educational with score 4.91 (extremely high) and needs for funding from private sector with score 2.57 (low) (1.80-2.60)
- Perspective 8: providing distribution channels, there are needs for incubating center to provide areas for product selling with good location and low cost, helping in finding local market and helping in public relations with average score 4.93, needs for finding new market with average score 4.07 and finding foreign market with average score 4.00 (high) (3.41-4.20)
- Perspective 9: providing information service, there are needs for information service by special experts with average score 5.00, by regional incubating center with average score 4.93, and Thai textile that was intellectual properties registered with average score 4.34 (extremely high); knowledge about Thai textile with average score 4.10 and statistics of new entrepreneurs that passed the incubating program with score 3.97 (high) (3.41-4.20)

Data analysis of key success indicator of incubating center from 30 responded questionnaires can concluded as follows

key success indicator of incubating center is that entrepreneurs who passed the incubating program can doing business with average score 5.00, can drawing chart with average score 4.93, having more business network with average score 4.90, having more entrepreneurs interested in joining program with average score 4.87, can doing business for more than 3 year with average score 4.57 and percentage of entrepreneurs who can passed the program with average score 4.43 (extremely high) and gaining more revenues with average score 3.47 and having percentage of entrepreneurs who can passed the program with average score 1.00 (extremely low)

Data analysis of 30 experts from sample group indicates that most of them have the same directions that it should set provincial incubating center by cultural ministry to act as the central department to cooperate with other departments to help building Thai textile entrepreneurs bringing information technology to use in selecting process for incubating, to collect and service information, knowledge about Thai textile and bringing innovative incubating model to use in the project for 100%

The results of the qualitative study can conclude as follows

- 1) To set an incubating program for Thai textile entrepreneurs:  
Most of Thai traditional textile expert view that Thailand still lacks of incubating entrepreneurs especially in Thai traditional textile. Then it should have a department to responsible in setting an incubating center to develop Thai traditional textile. In incubating processes, should be classified into three groups,
  - 1) Pre-Incubatee: new entrepreneurs that have potentials

- 2) Start– up Company: entrepreneurs that already performed business, gain revenues from business continuously and systematically
- 3) Spin – off Company: entrepreneurs that leveled up from Start – up Company. They should have capability in doing business without any supporting form incubating center, gain increasing revenues and have increasing work employment or continuous work employment.

**Ms. Sumolmal Taeja**, an expert in Thai traditional textile, who are group leader of textile fabrication of Kood-Kwang-Soi village, Nong-Bua-Lam-Poo Province in the north eastern region of Thailand, owner of a clothing shop named “Khwun-Ta” that won several awarded in designing and innovative mud fermented clothing, said *“During incubating process of Thai textile cultural entrepreneur, we should understand that Thai textile cultural entrepreneur is not only selling textile. They should comprehensively know their textile products, categories of textile, production processes, makers and markets etc. Moreover, they should be crazy in what they do. They should have creativity and foresee the opportunities. Presently, Thai traditional textiles have had evolution in designs, patterns, techniques, methodologies, cutting and sewing techniques. Clothing are adapted according to the modern fashion and applied to the other products. But the entrepreneurs still lose their opportunities”*

- 2) In training program of preparation Thai traditional textile entrepreneur, it found that knowledge in doing business, in intellectual cultural heritage and in designing to create identity to the products. It is the most important factors to build the cultural entrepreneurs that are different to the general entrepreneurs.

**Dr. Udom Sompon**, an expert in Thai traditional textile, the group leader of agriculture cooperative Thai-Vietnamese in Rajburi province in the west of Thailand who established “Miscellaneous Museum of Ku-Bua village” that nowadays is an important learning center mentioned

*“One who would be a good entrepreneur should have knowledge and understanding in managing product development and in seeking markets. For example, Teen-jok Thai-Vietnamese textile that has the prominence in nipping process that has delegate and unique local pattern and color. The troubles faced in traditional textile business is to seek the distribution channels. In case that there are less demands, the villagers will produce those textiles only in leisure time. Hence, in incubating process, the program should cover in providing knowledge, incubating and seeking markets to balance the demand and supply. Government sector should continuously support in incubating cultural entrepreneur to make the entrepreneurs survive in the business and villagers will have enough revenues”*

**Ms. Thongsiri Pukkaew**, an expert in Thai traditional textile, the group leader of female villager community enterprise in two provinces, Sakolnakorn, who owned the “Thongsiri Pale-blue textile” mentioned

*“The reasons why people did not wear Thai traditional textile is that the unfashionable patterns. Almost of Entrepreneurs trapped in the old styles. Then government sector should set the training format. Almost of them are still trapped in the old styles. There is no newly development. In this case, each of government departments should cooperate to each other to incubate entrepreneurs by setting new format to train the knowledge and understanding in products, product development, market seeking and business matching. This would help to drive Thai traditional textile to generate huge revenues to the nation”*

- 2.1) Business training should include market seeking, business planning and investment planning. Bringing technology to support the marketing activities, distribution channels and intellectual properties to prepare them to be entrepreneurs. Because most of entrepreneurs will make decision promptly when they found the opportunities and have enough funds and man power. They will weigh about the benefits and risks by considering the marketing potentials, internal and external factors, readiness and knowledge in the business, profits and losses. In conclusion, knowledge in doing business would help the entrepreneurs to find the opportunity gaps, risks management and self-access that how suitability they have in doing business.

**Mr. Paothon Thongjuer**, an famous Thai traditional textile expert who are well-known in Thailand and in the foreign country, an owner of a clothing shop in Thailand, gave interesting comments

*“Thai people, especially in government departments did not cooperate in working to each other. Villagers had to be trained in the repetitive subjects. So, the development paces have been delayed. There was not the top-up training. Training programs were designed in too much in general way. Most of the programs were trained to the job creators rather than entrepreneurs. Then most of*

*Thai traditional textile entrepreneurs were clothing merchants not entrepreneurs who had knowledge and skills in doing business. Then, to set the formal incubating in Thai traditional textile would lead to support new generation people to interest to be Thai traditional textile entrepreneurs. Government sector should support in resources and market channels. To encourage the start-up to do the business in more stability and less risks. Bringing innovation into incubating process during the policy of Thailand 4.0 (digital economy focused) are the right way. Because we have to give the importance to the new generation people, especially in Thai traditional textile that still have a lot of issues to do.”*

- 2.2) Training in production process in pattern design to create the different styles, in new products development and fabrication techniques, tie-dyeing techniques, efficiency improvement by machinery and packaging design.

**Mr. Komol Pamichpun**, a Thai traditional textile expert who owns antique textile museum and a shop as learning sources in Pae, Northern Province in Thailand, commented that

*“Thai traditional textile is valuable cultural heritage and distinctive characteristics that can be bring to generate high amount of revenues to Thailand. In bringing identity of the products to on-top develop to serve needs and to solve the troubles of consumers in maintenance, laundry, and pricing. Technology or innovation can be used to improve Thai traditional textile to be more interesting and be responded to consumers’ needs that leads to increase competitive advantage. Nowadays, Komol Antique Textile brings technology to use in pattern design, fabrication, production and marketing. Those products are welcomed as Thailand’s souvenir distributed in airport and on flight. Moreover, incubating will help leveling up Thai traditional textile entrepreneurs with knowledge, capacity and updated technology”*

**Mr. Nitud Kuppeng**, an Thai traditional textile expert, who is a local intellectual teacher and own a shop named “Puranach”, a domestic “Lanna style” in Chiangmai, northern province in Thailand, commented that *“Charming of Thai traditional textile are handicrafts, hand making in piece by piece, that are different from goods from manufacturing. Delicate and beautiful pattern of piece is different. The entrepreneur should understand this point. Anyway, we are unavoidable to bring new technology and innovation to improve Thai traditional textile.”*

- 3) To set counseling center by expert, it found that most of Thai traditional textile expert have opinions that in incubating entrepreneurs to be success, incubating center should have human resource in the specific subjects that can give counseling to the entrepreneurs, in all aspects such as design, business and marketing, production techniques, machinery and commercialization, finance and investment.
- 4) To provide source of funds: most of Thai traditional textile expert view that incubating center should provide source of supported funds, from both government sector and educational organization and from private sector, to support entrepreneurs who have enough potentials.
- 5) To provide source of loans by cooperated with alliances: most of Thai traditional textile expert view that incubating center should provide source by cooperated with alliances, including banks and universities to set low interest rate loan program to support entrepreneurs who want to expand their business.
- 6) To provide information service: most of Thai textile expert view that incubating center should incubating center should set central department to collect and accumulate data for providing information to entrepreneurs or general people who are interested to be new entrepreneurs. Useful information is sub-incubating in region of the country, data of Thai traditional textile which registered with Intellectual Property rights, Thai traditional textile body of knowledge, statistics of new entrepreneurs, success rate of training programs by quarter.
- 7) To measure the success of incubating center: most of Thai traditional textile expert view that there are five key success factors as follows: 1) number of entrepreneurs who passed the incubating program must greater than 70% 2) entrepreneurs who passed the incubating program can write business plan 3) entrepreneurs who passed the incubating program can do business and gain more revenues or get more network after passed the program 4) Increasing in number of entrepreneurs who are interesting in joining the next program compare to prior program 5) Increasing in number of entrepreneurs who passed the program each year.

A model of incubating process that can be used in incubating cultural entrepreneurs especially in Thai traditional textiles in Thailand to be sustainably succeeded, as shown in figure 2.

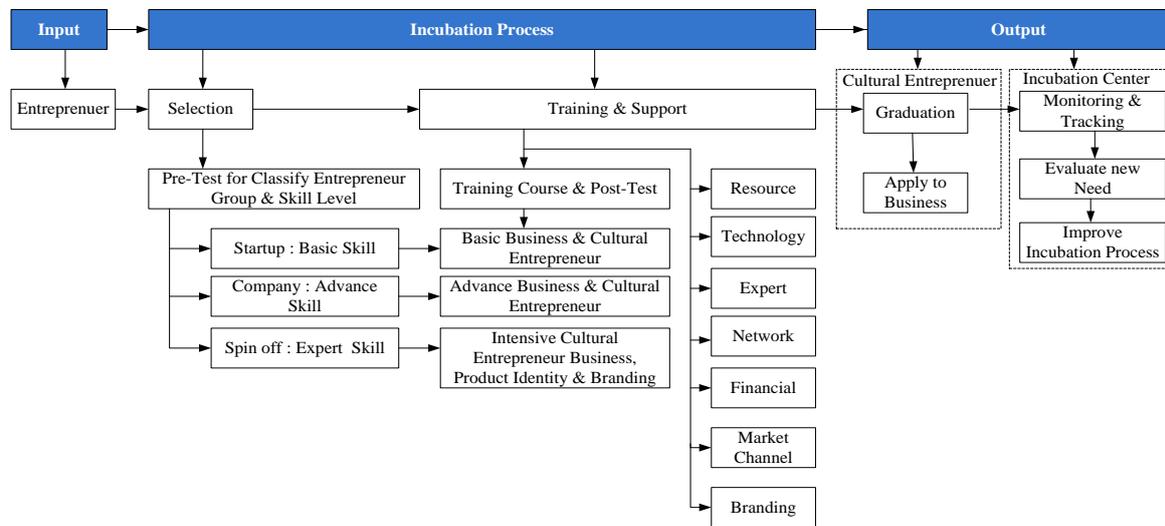


Fig. 2 Cultural Entrepreneur Incubator Process Model

From Fig.2 shows the incubating process to create Thai textile cultural entrepreneurs to be successful that developed by literature review, knowledge of incubating process collect and cultural entrepreneur incubating and data analysis from research. The model are consists of

Selecting process of entrepreneurs, classifying and grouping for trainee and training programs, divided into 3 groups

- 1.1) Startup : Basic Skill program Basic Business & Cultural Entrepreneur,
- 1.2) Company : Advance Skill , Advance Business & Cultural Entrepreneur,
- 1.3) Spin off : Expert Skill, Intensive Cultural Entrepreneur Business, Product Identity & Branding.

There are training programs for potential entrepreneurs. And facilities to support the business. e.g. Resource, Technology, Expert, Network, Financial, Market Channel, Branding

There are assessment and follow up after training to measure success rate, divided into 2 parts

- 1) Measurement of success of entrepreneur who passed the program
- 2) Measurement of success of incubating center by follow up for sales figure and profits of entrepreneurs and needs for training to improving incubating processes.

**Conclusion** – To create Cultural Entrepreneur especially in Thai traditional textiles in Thailand to be sustainably succeeded, comprises of 9 ways. Experts mostly emphasized on setting incubating center that provides activities and services systematically; Cooperation among government departments, universities and private sectors; setting training program that suitable for entrepreneur groups; providing special program for Thai traditional textiles, Supporting for resources needed for doing business; including information collecting and servicing about knowledge of Thai traditional textiles existing in Thailand; Using technology and innovation in incubating process to develop the potentials of entrepreneurs to be succeeded. According to Yupa (2012) that studied the factors effecting to the success of cultural entrepreneurs in Thailand. That research done by survey research and the results found that the success factors are knowledge and expert in design and product development, varieties of distribution channels and policy supported from government sector.

Research results indicated that to develop cultural entrepreneurs in Thai traditional textile to be sustainable success, it should have processes that balanced among arts, technologies and funding. According to Aageson (2009), opportunity in

doing cultural business must balance between arts and funding. Arts create the commerce and arts have to rely on commerce. Then, arts generate the cultural entrepreneurs and generate cultural capital and need for monetary funding. Arts needed supporting from publics and it generate tax revenues returns to publics. Arts generate the market and needed market also. Arts can generate jobs, leveling up the living standards while arts need for creative work forces.

**Contribution** – New knowledge that merging concepts of activities and services of incubating center and concepts of entrepreneur incubating to build entrepreneurs to be succeeded.

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